

Extracts
Letter-book of Capt. Alex. Mc. Donald
and
Diary of Lieut. John C. P. von Kraft.
Ira K. Morris

Revolution - Staten
Island.

BOX II

Extracts from the Letter-Book of Captain Alexander McDonald of the Royal Highland Emigrants, 1775-1779¹

IRA K. MORRIS

Captain Alexander McDonald was an old line officer of the British Army, who came to this country with his command just prior to the Revolution and settled on Staten Island, where he pretended to own a farm.

On glancing over his Letter-Book, through the courtesy of the New York Historical Society, we find him to be a very strenuous Royalist, who uses the most bitter language about the Americans, whom he delights to class as "Rebels." He was an unreasonable extremist in whatever he said or did. Several times he had the Continental army wiped off the face of the earth—theoretically.

The first letter we find in his book was addressed to General Gage, in the summer of 1775. If, however, he was no better soldier than grammarian, he certainly did very little harm to his enemies. He suggests to General Gage that Staten Island would furnish fresh provisions for his army. He goes on to tell how easily the armed sloops of the British Navy, while on their way from Sandy Hook to Albany, "Taking in Staten island, they might Burn and Destroy Brunswick & amboy, for nothing can cure the Madness that prevails all over America but the Severest of usage."

On November 4, 1775, Captain McDonald writes to Walter and Thomas Buchanan as follows:

"Pray for god sake Let me know why the people of New York and thereabouts has pronounced Sentence of death on me, is it because I would not offer such violence to my honour and Conscience as to falsify my oath of fidelity and allegiance and take

¹ Presented in abstract at the meeting of the Association November 20, 1915.

up arms against a Master whom I have served for thirty years and in a Cause of which I always entertained a bad Opinion and always believed, and does not now, that it will terminate in the destruction of the Authors of it, for which I am very sorry, they should Merit the treatment I am afraid they will meet with, I am not an Enemy to any individual upon Earth, nor have a Grudge against any, and I dont wish to meet my friends or old acquaintances in a place where they or I must fall, yet I am determined to be true to the trust reposed in me, and discharge my duty with honour or a Long as I Live and Whoever Criminal the friends of the Congress may think this Conduct in me, why should an innocent woman with her Children be troubled as my wife was soon after my Coming away from Staten Island. A parcel of fellows went to my house with more than Savage rudeness, rummaged the house as they pretended for arms, swore they would have me dead or alive, and frightened her out of her Senses, by whose order they went I am not able to Learn, but whoever ordered them he is not a sound politician for I think he had better secure my friendship than by this behavior making me a more Inveterate Enemy than otherwise I might be. The affairs of America are not far from being settled and it is as hard to know how Matters will turn out, and upon the whole I think they might as well make me a friend as force me to be a more inveterate enemy than otherwise I should incline to. I'll Cut short and Say No more on this Subject but that I wish to God a Mode of reconciliation between Great Brittain & her Colonies Consistent with the dignity and Grandeur of Great Brittain as well as the interest and happiness of America—"

Captain McDonald went with his command to Halifax, while the wife and children remained on Staten Island. On March 28, 1776, he writes, calling her "My Darest Life." As near as I can locate the farm it is now known as the Decker estate in the old town of Northfield.

"I would wish that I had but you & the children along with me," he writes, "and yet the fear of Exposing you to Eminent

danger, and God knows what trouble forbids my encouraging you to move from where you are, if you can but remain with any degree of ease or Comfort, and more particularly as I have some hopes of being able Coming to see you this Summer as I hope a varst Number of troops will be Landed there as well as in a great many other parts of America—but I shall Say nothing about Polleticks—the deluded Americans will be Convinced of their Error. Proposals are going to be made to them which if they will Agree to, good and well, and if they refuse them, it is not only Great Brittain but all europe that stands ready to Crush them: this they will not believe 'til they find it's too Late—for gods sake fail not to write often if you can find any Opportunity of putting them aboard of the man of war."

After regretting his inability to have his wife and children with him at Halifax, Captain McDonald adds: "Surely the people [on Staten Island] has not got so barberously mad as to Molest or hurt a poor innocent woman and still more Innocent poor Children and Especially till they know how Matters are to be settled in America. Should you form a Resolution of Coming to me with the Children, I have given directions to the Commanding officer of His Majestys Ships in the harbor of New Yorke to Send you all the assistance In his power, and procure you a passage in any of his Majestys Ships that Should Come this way; it's to be hoped you will be allowed to depart in peace and dispose of as much of your Effects as you dont chuse to Carry along with You. You may bring as much Corn, oats, wheat or flour, Gammons, & fowls, of all Sorts as you can possibly get aboard. David & Donald & Gilbert if he chuses shall Come along with You, all this is only in Case you should Chuse to Come, but if you could live happy and at peace where you are, I would Like it better as I think it was best for you, for a Little time 'til I am able to know how Matters are Like to go. . . Kiss the Children for me and with my best wishes and kind respects to all friends, I ever am my Dearest Your affectionate Husband & most obedient Very humble Servt."

Writing from Halifax, April 24, 1776, to J. Ogilvie, presumably on Staten Island, he adds:

"I am at a Loss to know whether we shall have rank or half pay—if we Shall not the Ministry will be guilty of the most barbarous Cruelty that ever was known, Especially to us who has been Cumfortably Situated and Left our wives and Children to the Mercy of a Merciless Enemy, and at the Risque of our Lives flew to the defence and preservation of the honour intrest and dignity of our King & Country. Should Such of us as Survives these troubles be turned about their business, without rank or half pay, after this Unnatural Rebellion is Quelled—might be Attended with bad Consequences upon a future Occasion but for my own part I don't believe we shall meet with so Much injustice," etc.

In the early summer of 1776, Captain McDonald writes to General Howe, in a very unhappy vein, in consequence of his failure in promotion, beginning: "Tho I find the footing I am on at present, irksome from its unpromising Prospect, & tho from Your Excellency's Rank & Character, you are the Personage to whom I would naturally look up for any relief, it might require, or reasonably Admit of; yet, Sensible that Amidst the Weight of publick Affairs which Occupied Your Mind, it would have been improper to trouble you while here, I take the Liberty of Laying My Case before You in this manner & time, humbly persuaded that if anything worthy your Attention will happily Occurr, you will be pleased to forgive the freedom & in that event also will experience in You the Patron of An Old Soldier.

"It is now going on thirty two Years since I enter'd the Service, in the Course of which I lost many Chances, tho I Underwent All the Vicissitudes, fatigues & dangers that commonly fall to the Share of a Man without Money or any Considerable Interest. However as I enjoy'd, so I flatter Myself I never deserve to forfeit the Esteem & regard of my Superior Officers. I was in the Most Active Scenes of the last war that were exhibited in the West Indies & the Southern Provinces of this Continent, was

Sorely wounded, & After the Peace was reduced Captain Lieutenant of Coll. Montgomery's.

“After All this I married & Settled on Statten Island in the Province of New York, where from the Uhappy Spirit that has Actuated the Americans for Years past I had frequent Opportunities of doing My Duty in defending the Authority of the Parent State over the Colonies as much As was possible for any private Subject—As far as my inferior Judgement could enable me, I Made it My business to Observe wherein the root of the Evil lay, & the means fit for exterminating or Conquering it, Never doubting but Matters would proceed to the present Extremitys, if Not in My day, at Least Not at Any distant period—In time of the Stamps I offered Myself to the Commander in Chief for any Service he might require, & thereafter began to prepare for taking the part I clearly saw my duty would demand & that Shortly too—In the Mean time the Methods, which have been but too Successfully Used to withdraw Other Unhappy half Pay Officers from their Allegiance, were Also applied to me.

“The Temptation of a very Command was held forth, but rejected with Indignation: that of peculiar Support & Interest from My American allies was offered would I but remain peaceable & neutral at home: to this I could not reconcile my Mind, while My King and Country were reviled, & their Laws treated with Contempt—And when I saw they were on the very point of Commencing the Rebellion, I wrote to Major John Small, who was Connected with me in all these Endeavours desiring he would inform General Gage that I would join the Army with 100 good men, how soon His Excellency would enable me by granting a Captains Commission—The General was pleased to order Major Small to return me his thanks for my Loyalty & Spirited offers, but that Nothing could be done till further orders from home—In the mean time this hint was farther improved & in place of 100 it was proposed to raise 500 Men to be Commanded by Major Small: to which I entered with the greatest Pleasure, & it being recommended home from the General we did not doubt its being Adopted.

"In consequence I Sett off in the dead of Winter to the Mohawk River, where a Number of the Name of Macdonald are Settled with other Scotts Emigrants, two hundred of whom Agreed to join me when called upon, with many Others I bespoke as I traversed the Country—From the Mohawk River I directed My Course for Boston thro' frost Snow & Ice, in the very worst weather that was in the Winter, but arriving at Boston found nothing could be done untill the Answer from G Brittain was come to hand, therefore returned home to Staten Island. In this Circuit of About Six or Seven hundred Miles I found the Spirit of Rebellion & treason blazing everywhere—The People constantly exercising themselves to Arms, Liberty Poles erected Allmost at every Mile end, but at same time I Met with Many Attached to Government, tho but few in the Comparison."

Writing at Halifax to Major Small, on July 26, 1776, Captain McDonald tells of commanding a force going out to meet the Lieutenant-Governor at Covegate. "When I return," he says, "I Expect to find a Letter from Major Small upon my table giving An account of the Most Agreeable News, of General How and his Army, Succeeding in all his Undertakings, and next to that, that my wife and Children are well, and Relieved from their distresses and troubles [on Staten Island.] . . . I wish you may get our winter Quarters for the Whole Regt. to be in Cantonments on Staten Island.

"P. S. I almost forgot to tell you, that the Devil had almost entered Into Some of our Young fellows for getting wives, it was with the Uttmost difficulty I saved Lt. Laughlin McLean from destruction, that is to say, from being Married to a girl who had not a sixpence on Earth, its true she is so very handsome that I Could kiss her myself if I was not A married man, however I overset that match for the present."

In a letter to Colonel McLean, Captain McDonald takes occasion to say: "In regard to publick News, the Army is, thank God, going on As we could wish—I refer you to the publick Papers & for particulars to General Howe's two Aids de Camp,

who are Sent home with the dispatches—I hope the Neck of the Rebellion is broke—Now Government will only have to Settle & punish the Americans, for believe me Who knows this People, Lenity will Never make them good Subjects.”

Writing to Governor Tryon, November 26, 1776, Captain McDonald remarks:

“The Next thing I think Myself Entitled to is a Reparation for the damage my Farm on Statten Island Suffered, & I think a patent for Justice Muchero’s Farm is as little as I could Expect. As it must certainly be Confiscated, he being the Most infamous & Notorious Rebel in all the Country—and if it is a thing can be done consistently with Law and Equity, I should be Glad to have a Patent or at least a long exclusive Lease that no Person could keep a ferry Any Where over the Kill van Koul from Elizabeth Town Point to Ryerson’s Farm at the Mouth of the Kills opposite to New York—I am Certain this would be Much More Advantageous & for the Good of the Publick As the House which I intended to lett as a Tavern is exactly on the Road leading to the Blazing Star [Rossville] from Paul’s Hook, the Most Conveniently Situated for the ferry & it is one Of the Most elegant houses for a Tavern in All the Country, & for My part I would Allways take Care to keep a clever man in the house Understanding his Business, & that would keep the best things in his way. Whereas a number of pimping houses being kept all Allong that tract afford No Sort of Comfortable Entertainment to Man or Horse.”

[The “Muchero” farm is the present location of Port Richmond. The residence of Judge Mersereau is the old Continental Hotel, which was erected immediately after the close of the Revolution.]

In a letter to Captain McKenzie, written at Halifax November 26, 1776, Captain McDonald mentioned a matter still of public interest:

“One thing more I beg Leave to Mention to You which by the bye I am Affraid will Appear foolish or ridiculous, but still

it runs Strong in my head that After these troubles [the Revolution] are Settled it will be found necessary to have a dockyard on the Continent of America in a More Centrical place than Halifax, in which case I think there is a Mill pond close to My House on Statten Island which from My Notion of these Matters Might be Made one of the finest dockyards in the World. As it May very easily be made to contain a vast Number of Ships with the greatest Safety, & take in a first rate Man of War—The water may be raised to Any height you please, & at low water there may be one or more dry docks As will be found necessary—I form My Judgment from the Dock Yard at Helvoetsluys, of which this has an exact resemblance in point of Situation—All works of this kind is allways Attended with Expense, but I think this could be finished with less than Any other place I can think of, & in case Lord Howe entertains Any thoughts of this kind & would think this A proper place, I think I Might be of infinite Service in Making a purchase of the Land that Should be found necessary to be bought for the Use Of the Yards.

“In this or any thing of the kind that Should be thought of I depend upon Your friendship, as I have a weak family to bring on, who have Nothing else to depend upon than My honest Endeavours.”

To Pedro de Mendonzo, Captain McDonald wrote, on January 11, 1777:

“Soon after your Departure from us on Statten Island I was forced to leave my family Wife & Children at that Place & join the Army at Boston under the Command of General Gage. This I was forced to do rather than to turn Rebel & traytor to my King & Country or run the risque of Suffering many cruel treatments & Insults from a Merciless cruel ignorant & Misled Rabble. However after an absence of Sixteen Months from my family I joined them about the 10th of August last, when I had the pleasure of finding them alive & in good health Tho’e Mrs. McDonald had rec’d a vast many insults & abuses As far as words and Language & Quartering the Villains in her house

could do But she behaved with an Uncommon degree of Courage & even went so far as when they cursed the King she cursed the Congress to their faces & I had the pleasure of Seeing them Since well drubed Almost in Sight of my own house & after that being totally dispersed so far that the Rebellion is looked upon to be Settled I was order'd here Summer last was a year to the Command a Battalion of a New Regiment.

"If you will be So kind as to send me three or four pipes of the very best Madeira that Island ever produced I shall Send you good Bills of Exchange in Return & if I had a hundred pipes last Summer I could have sold them for Bills of Ex'ge at a good price Amongst my brother offi'rs of the Army. I left New York the Latter End of October last & brought Mrs. McDonald and the Whole family here how long we are to be Stationed in this place God only knows we are sure to remain till May next & Mrs. McDonald will be much obliged to you if you'll send her one or two Boxes Citron & a ten Gallon Keg of the very best Malmasea Wine—all these things I should be glad were Sent in one of his Majesty's Ships of War As I Suppose you will have an Opportunity of Seeing a Great Many of them there.

"After the affairs of America are Settled there will be no less than Thirty thousand troops left in this Country w'ch will Consume a vast Quantity of Madeira & I hope to have it in My power to Serve my friends more than ever."

Captain McDonald writes to an officer on Staten Island, June 11, 1777: "If you are Still on my place in Staten Island as I'm inform'd your Regiment was Station'd there I will be infinitely oblig'd to you if youl give every possible assistance to my Brother in Law in allowing your men to work in Cultivating the farm Making up the fences &c. as the place has been ruin'd by the troops last Summer."

Four days later Captain McDonald writes to William McAdams, residing on Staten Island, as follows:

"I send you inclosed two Acco'ts with an order to receive their Contents & keep it in your hands till you hear from Major Small

or me only if my Brother in Law to whom I left the care of my farm on Statten Island Should be any Ways successful in In-listing men for this Corps let him have a Little money and will be much obliged to you if you will take a little Concern in the management of that place. Should a little money be wanted for repairing the fences & other Damages done by the troops be so good as to advance it at any rate I am apprehensive that a Great Deal of money may be made on that place if it was properly managed, as matters go at this time."

To Gilbert Meyer Captain McDonald writes: "Use your utmost Endeavors to put the farm in the best order, Especially to have it immediately properly fenced & endeavor to raise every thing that can Command money. You should endeavor to get a couple of Good Gardners & make all the Garden you can—Endeavor to get As many men for this Regim't as possibly you can & keep them along with yourself on the farm close at work until a proper Opportunity will offer to transport them here.

"You will Speak to Jno. Simerson & if he is inclined to dispose of that Small tract of land Between mine & the Mill dam & joining to the tract he Soldd to Mr. Win. Black As my farm is destitute for want of Water Ill give him as much an Acre for it as Col. Simmons or any other honest man on the Island will think it worth. You will please give my kind Comp'ts to Mr. Charlton [rector of St. Andrew's church] & Colo. Simmons & tell them I beg the favor they w'd assist you in making this purchase & how soon the purchase is secured so that he can't go back from his word I shall order the Money to be pd Upon the Signing & Delivery of the deeds. If the Affairs of Americá are liked to be Settled this Summer You may expect to see our family there."

Seeking promotion at the hand of Lord Amherst, Captain McDonald wrote:

"Two Years ago I troubled your Lordship with a Letter Solliciting for the Government of Crown Point, to w'ch I was honored with a Suitable Answer by your Lordship—Matters of another kind now Oblige me to repeat the trouble—

"I have been on the most active Services on the Continent of America & in the West Indies during the last war—have been severely wounded & as I never missed an hour of My duty all that time no Command'g Ooff'r Challenged or found fault with me—

"In time of the Stamp Act, I most freely Offered my Service to Gen'l Gage in Case it should be found Necessary to levy any troops in America.

"In October 1774 perceiving the Americans Were determined to revolt, I wrote Major Jno. Small then at Boston, desiring he w'd inform Gen'l Gage that I was Settled on Statten Island & ready to Join the Army with a hundred as fine fellows as ever Carried arms, most partly Non Commiss'd officers & private men Who had been discharged from the Highland Regim'ts after the Conclusion of last War & from the Knowledge they had Acquired of the Country might be found very useful as Guides to conduct Any part of the Army Wherever his Excellency had Occasion to send them or in Any Other way in w'ch they might be found conducive to the Service. . . .

"Accordingly I sent out from Statten Island thro' frost & Snow to the Mohawk river, where there were 200 highlanders who had lately arrived from Scotland Settled on part of Sir John Johnstons Estate & being Chiefly of my own Name I engaged every one of them, Offering a Captain's Commission to the Gentleman who was at their head from thence I returned to Boston making My observations on the Conduct of the Country People as I went along & leaving trusty persons at Diff't Stations to pick up all able bodied & well effected young men Especially Such as had emigrated from the North of Scotland Enjoining the greatest Secrecy as I had been directed.

"Arriving at Boston I reported every thing I had done & Seen to the Gen'l—But no Acco't having then as yet been rec'd from home concerning a plan there was nothing more to be done for that time & I ret'd home to Statten Island—Making my Remarks as I went along, I found the people more violent & Insolent—Nothing but Committees & Liberty poles at every Mile end."

The letter further adds: "Its to be observed that by this time All America had broke out in open Violence & Rebellion—Every friend of Governm't was persecuted & none durst take a Step in favor of Governm't under pain of imprisonm't & unheard of Outrages. This rendered our future Success Difficult & precarious & laid us under the Necessity of Altering the ground of our proceedings—

"I was Sixteen months absent from My family. My place upon Staten Island is totally ruined as well by our own troops as by the Rebels. My Wife & Children were more abused & insulted on Acco't of her being an American born than if she had been from any other Country. Yet she continued a Steady loyal Subject in spite of every abuse or insult they could offer her & She found means to Convey Useful Articles of intelligence to Governor Tryon. Capt'n Hyde Parker & Capt'n Vandeput w'ch these Gentl'n can better relate in short, My Lord, I have been a Capt'n Lieu'l the 5th of Aug'st 1762 A full Cap't in 1772 when all Capt'n Lieul's got Rank Yet after all this My long services & Sufferings what am I? A provincial Capt'n in place of being an olde Major in the Army & may be when these disturbances are over turned ab't my Business without either Rank or half pay a Cruel unjust & unmerited ill treatment should it so happen."

To Gilbert Meyer, who was in charge of the farm on Staten Island, Captain McDonald wrote from Halifax on October 16, 1777:

"My Dr. Gilly: I am much at a loss n't to write to you as you are so neglectful in letting me hear from you how Matters stands with y'rself & place. I am sorry to hear that the Barn is burnt when the Jersey people paid you a visit but this is a trifle in Comparison to other things you Should make it your business to write every Month an Acc't of every thing that passes & w't you wish to let me know Leav'g the Letters with Mr. McAdam in New York who will not miss any opportunity of Sending them."

In a letter to Mr. McAdam, June 10, 1778, Captain McDonald

says: "I understand my place upon Statten Island is totally ruined and as the affairs of America stands at present I dont think it worth while to be at any trouble about the place till they are finally Settled. As to My Acco't ag'st the 71st I have taken Care to have it Settled here."

Under date of January 19, 1779, at Halifax, Captain McDonald writes to William McAdam, on Staten Island: "Having wrote you lately I have nothing now to trouble you with but the Melancholy acco't of Mrs. Mcdonald's Death & left me behind a Miserable wretch with five children much at a loss wch way to turn myself to provide for them Shou'd God Spare my life to see them able to do for themselves."

Captain McDonald's Letter-Book contains a great deal of material relative to the troublous times of the Revolution, but we have recorded about all there is of particular interest to Staten Island.

Extracts From the Diary of Lieutenant John Charles Philip von Krafft, 1776-1784¹

IRA K. MORRIS

John Charles Philip von Krafft was born in Dresden, Saxony, on Thursday, August 21, 1752. He is said to have been of a baronial family, whose seat was at Delitzsch-on-the-Hill, near Leipzig, in Saxony, and to have borne the title of Baron. A drawing of his coat armor, made by himself, has inscribed on its reverse, in his handwriting, "Related to the Princes of Hohenlohe." He was also related to other families of rank, in Prussia and Saxony, and was descended from ancestors who had been officers in the military service of Prussia for generations.

On the 4th of July, 1773, he was commissioned ensign in Major-General von Luck's regiment of fusiliers, in the Prussian army, under Frederick the Great, and on the 29th of December, in the same year, second lieutenant in the same regiment. In the beginning of 1776 he was lieutenant of the second company of grenadiers, in the fusilier regiment of von Luck. The regiment was then stationed at Braunsberg, a garrison town of Eastern Prussia.

During the early part of 1776, becoming wearied of the life of a garrison town, with its dinners at the General's, sleighrides, flirtations, duels with fellow officers, etc., he determined to resign. The king refused his application. Finally, however, he reported for duty for the last time.

After visiting St. Petersburg in his wanderings and refusing a commission in the Russian army he became a volunteer on board an American privateer, bound from France to Philadelphia. After varied experiences and hardships he became a non-com-

¹ Presented in abstract at the meeting of the Association November 20, 1915. Compiled from publications in the possession of the New York Historical Society.

missioned officer in the British army, the Hessian Corps under Knyphaussen, and participated in the Battle of Monmouth and numerous skirmishes in New York State and New Jersey.

In 1783 Lieutenant von Krafft was secretly married in New York to Miss Cornelia de la Metre, the daughter of a widow residing "past the 5th Mile Stone, King's Bridge Road, on New York Island." This occurred without his mother's consent.

It seems to have been his intention to visit his mother, when he sailed for England with his regiment in 1783. Before reaching there, however, he resolved to resign and return to America. After a short stay in England, in February 1784, he boarded the ship *Vigilant*, in the Thames, and on the 11th of March arrived off Sandy Hook and anchored off "Fly Market Wharf" the next afternoon.

For several years thereafter "Mr. de Krafft" supported himself and his family by teaching in New York City. Then he became employed as surveyor and draughtsman to the Treasury Department. When the seat of government was removed to Washington, he went thither with his department and continued in its service until his decease.

He made preparations to go to Germany and claim the ancestral estate, but death prevented on July 24, 1804. He was a man of commanding presence and of fascinating manners. He had a quick temper and was sensitive to affronts. During his military service, 1770 to 1784, he was the principal in about twenty duels, and was several times severely wounded. His descendants have held responsible positions and high rank in the civil and naval service of the United States.

Von Krafft's journal is full of interest to Staten Islanders. On August 23, 1779, with one of the Hessian regiments von Krafft came to Staten Island. All branches of the British army came to New York and vicinity on this day, The Hessian army was fever-stricken, some regiments having over two hundred on sick list. One regiment had not a single man able to serve.

On January 14, 1780, von Krafft says: "In the evening there

was a great alarm to the effect that the Rebels were approaching. Firing was heard on Staten Island (of our troops were there: the Hessian Guard Regiment Bienau, the 57th English Regt., the 54th Rooens Corps, and the R. P. Corps.) Immediately a detachment of Hesse-Anspachers and English numbering several hundred men, was ordered over there. But no ship could cross on account of the ice, neither was it strong enough to march across.

"15 Jan. Sat. They again attempted to get the detachment across, but it was impossible. In the evening a spy had, to our wonderment, succeeded in stealing over from the State of Jersey and from him we learned that the Rebels had arrived in force, that they had set fire to a Jersey magazine and driven away many cattle; but as our men had held out well in the redoubts, the enemy had not been able to gain any advantage, but instead had to leave nearly 100 prisoners behind."

On March 1, 1780, von Krafft was promoted to ensign in Lieut.-Col. Hinte's Company, but with the pay of sergeant.

"In the morning (March 2) we were mustered by an Englishman in the old Eingiessen Church, in which horses or other animals were sometimes kept on the square of Crown (now Liberty) street." [The Dutch Church later became the Post Office, and was demolished for the erection of the building of the Mutual Life Insurance Co.]

"Tuesday, June 6, 1780. On picket reserve. From this day forth I was on the march to Staten Island and New Jersey, until the 24th inst.

"At 3 a. m. an unexpected order came for all to march. I took the necessary steps, gave my money and papers in the safe-keeping of Lieutenant Col. Hinte, and at 10 a. m. we—Donop's regiment—set sail on schooners and shluppen (sloops.) Towards evening we landed on Staten Island. Our regiment encamped around a church-yard and that night I slept on a grave-mound.

"On June 7, Before day-break the whole army, English and Hessians, marched past us. We followed them to protect the

baggage and marched to the narrowest part of the water, [Holland's Hook], where we were to be ferried over to New Jersey. . . . We marched through the pretty little town of Liesbethtown, which is of a long shape, and then I took part in the side patrols. We constantly heard firing ahead of us, and the Rebels gave much annoyance to our army, which numbered nearly 9,000. . . . We encamped in the form of a square in front of the little town, just before daybreak. We had an unannounced number of dead and wounded. The Rebels kept on making attacks all night.

"Sunday, June 18. To-day General Klinton returned from Charlestown, (S. C.) with all the Grenadiers and English troops. These he landed on Staten Island." General Cornwallis remained with his army at Charlestown.

"Thursday, June 22, at 7.30 a. m. I got a furlough from Col. v. Goosen to New York. I went on foot (across a very pretty bridge connecting Staten Island and Jersey. It consisted entirely of sloops and schooners) away to the end of Staten Island, a walk of three hours. Thence I proceeded on a provision schooner to New York where I arrived at 5 p. m.

"Friday, June 23. It was my desire to remain here (N. Y.) longer, but hearing some loud firing in the direction of our camp, and ascertaining from reports that our army had marched further on, I immediately prepared for my departure. My ambition compelled me to go. All flat boats having gone to Staten Island, I got on board a ship that had been ordered to General Knipp-hausen. We sailed at 4 p. m. and arrived towards 9 p. m. near the ship bridge. But after passing the watch ship, it being dark, we ran aground and could not get off till morning at high tide. Here we heard that the greater part of our army had advanced as far as Springfield, but had been obliged to return again.

"Before daybreak the whole army hastened with all possible speed across the ship-bridge. This was then broken up and Donop's regiment had been obliged to stay behind in some ramparts to protect it. Soon after, he too embarked in flat-boats and,

unseen by the Rebels, crossed to Staten Island. This caused much reflection and wonderment. N. B. While I was sailing from New York I saw all the Grenadiers and English regiments passing from Staten Island in large ships and sailing up the North River, where they landed at Philipp's House and were obliged to pitch a hut camp.

"June 24. At daybreak, looking from our schooner, we saw our whole army on Staten Island, and the rising tide lifting us again we sailed back, landed and I returned to my regiment. A short time after, we marched on, but tonight we were obliged to sleep in the pouring rain.

"Thursday, Sept. 28. To-day some distinguished inhabitants of New York were arrested for having been in correspondence with the Rebels. They were all betrayed, in a list of names, to General Klinton by a deserting Rebel General who had arrived here named Arnold, a German; for the same reason more inhabitant were daily taken to the prison (Provo). An adjutant, Major André of the 54th English regiment of General Klinton, having been sent on a secret errand, was caught by the Rebels and hanged as a spy, which caused much excitement among the English.

"January 6, 1781. At 6 o'clock in the morning, General Clinton went to Staten Island with English Grenadiers, 2 Hessian regiments and other troops, not alone on account of his attempted capture, but among many other things; more especially on account of the rumored mutiny which some regiments of the Rebels are said to have attempted. He sent some parts of them across to Jersey, but they came back a few days afterwards without having accomplished anything of importance.

"March 1. General Clinton had announced in his orders the advantage which the Brigadier Gen. Arnold (who had deserted from the Rebels) had gained in Richmond with the English troops and others he had with him. He had burnt all the stores of provisions and ammunition there and lost but few men.

"Monday, October 8. This morning I went on a 'small tour'

to Morris (Jumel) house, where our Lieut-Colonel still dwelt, to report a soldier to him for an offense. At 10 o'clock the English prince passed our regiment to view the line, where he was saluted from the fort with several guns. . . . General Clinton met me on the way there.

"Friday, October 12. The above mentioned troops on Staten Island went on board the men-of-war and transport ships, even the Prince and General Clinton accompanying them.

"Wednesday, October 24. All day and night we heard loud an continuous gun and musket firing by the Rebels, the origin of which we at first did not know. But shortly afterwards we heard with sorrow that the otherwise so celebrated Gen. Lord Cornwallis had been taken prisoner by the French and Rebels in the South, where, besides the English, also the Hessian Bose and Erb Prinz regiments were captured, and it was not wrong to conjecture that Savanna would soon follow in this pitiful run of ill-fate. It afterwards was deserted by our troops. Lord Cornwallis soon after came on parole to New York and from there to England.

"Saturday, December 8. This morning Col. Heymel unexpectedly had me called from the watch, and only he who had been in like circumstances, as myself, can feel as I did when, with a frank, cheerful face, he handed me a commission as Ensign, from Cassel, in Bose's regiment, with monthly pay from October 1st."

Von Krafft lived a checkered life throughout the remainder of the war. Much of his time was spent on Staten Island. He gives an interesting account of the departure from America.

"Sunday, November 23. We lay quietly on anchor hourly expecting orders to set sail. The city was full of Rebels, although all the watches in the city were still occupied by the English, and it was said that we were to lie at anchor until their embarkation. Several orders were given relating to signals and in regard to setting sail, which latter, however, was as yet prevented by contrary winds. In the night time, between 11 and 12 o'clock, a terrible fire occurred in New York. Then the ringing of alarm

bells and the uproar made by the disgustingly drunken sailors of our ship who had been in the city until late, made it quite a restless night. The fire continued until 3 in the morning, when we could see no more. This noon we saw the American soldiers take possession of Paulus Hook [Jersey City].

"Monday, November 24. During the fore and afternoon several ships of our fleet sailed, but not further than Staten Island. N. B. We subaltern officers had no other duty on ship than inspection of the watch, and giving out provisions, which every other day fell to me and to today for the first time.

"Tuesday, November 25. This morning signals were again given from the Commander's ship, whereupon at 10 a. m. our ship, with the tide and good wind, sailed as far as Staten Island near Kohl's ferry, 10 English miles from New York, where we anchored again at 11, at a given signal from the agent's ship. Here we saw several sloops with English troops and baggage arriving from New York at Kohl's ferry and debarking there, probably, as had already been rumored, to embark there as soon as the expected ships arrived.

"My whole heart is full of sadness when I see fading from my view the receding landmarks and housetops, in whose midst I leave my whole happiness behind me. At 2 p. m. the anchors were again lifted and we sailed with our beylot [pilot] as far as the bar at Sandy Hook arriving there at 3½ o'clock in the afternoon, when the pilot left us. I entrusted a letter to him addressed to David Bergen at York. Here we met some ships coming from Halifax and some from London. They were transports coming to get the remainder of the troops in New York. We had west wind. The night was somewhat dark.

"Wednesday, November 26. This morning we saw our whole fleet consisting of 14 ships at different distances around about us. The Agent's ship which was nearest to us, had taken in most of its sails, probably in order to await the Commander whom we had not seen since leaving New York; accordingly all the other ships had to take in sail. Without knowing anything certain we

followed the Agent's ship and hoisted sail about 10 o'clock a. m. but with very light wind.

"At 8½ a. m. we met a ship coming from Halifax. At 12, noon, we were 60 miles from Sandy Hook, but there was a great calm and we had drifted towards the South and accordingly felt warm. Our whole fleet was together, which looked fine. After 4 we spoke three ships from England on their way to New York, which intensified the anguish of my heart nigh unto despair. We had bad weather and contrary wind which increased during the night."

"Thursday, November 27. In the morning I began to get sea-sick, because the storm constantly increased and it became so violent towards night that the captain himself said he had never experienced a greater storm. As we were driven towards land and were not more than 40 miles off, our destruction was inevitable, if the storm continued. On deck a cow, 4 sheep and two pigs and about 30 fowls were killed owing to the cruel tossing and pitching of the ship. In our cabin everything went to pieces and was afloat, which was attributable to the negligence of the ship's captain, Thomas Patter of London: but at last Heaven came to our rescue. The storm abated and we got a favorable wind."

And so by this rude diary we get a glimpse of the closing scene of the American Revolution. As before stated, however, von Krafft returned to America in time, and became an efficient official of our Government.

MONTROSS & CLARKE CO.
STATIONERS & PRINTERS
14 MAIDEN LANE NEW YORK

To duplicate this book send us
this number.

